

Message Text

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72

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AF-10 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01

RSR-01 /108 W

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R 161851 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9764

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03183

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, SU, JO, UK

SUBJECT: BBC AND PALESTINIANS

REF: AMMAN 1095

1. WE HAVE ASKED FCO' S CRAIG WHAT PROBLEM IS WITH BBC. HE POINTS OUT MOST ANNOUNCERS, TRANSLATORS, ETC. ARE PALESTINIANS. WHILE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN PAST, PROBLEM HAS TENDENCY TO RECUR IN MOMENTS OF EMOTIONAL STRESS.

2. FCO REGULARLY RECEIVES COMPLAINTS ABOUT PRO- ARAB BIAS OF BBC FROM SOME QUARTERS AND ABOUT ANTI- ARAB BIAS FROM ARAB DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES. HMG POLICY IS TO KEEP HANDS OFF BBC. CRAIG SAID HE HAD RECEIVED NO COMPLAINTS ON BROADCASTS CONNECTED WITH KHARTOUM ATTACK (REFTEL).

3. COMMENT: WE DO NOT SEE LIKELIHOOD MAKING MUCH MILEAGE ON THIS ONE, AND CHANCES OF BACKFIRE IF WE PERSISTED. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO MENTION THIS AND ANY RELATED QUESTIONS TO NEW BRITISH EMBASSY COUNSELLOR MELHUSH WHEN HE SHORTLY TAKES UP HIS AMMAN ASSIGNMENT AFTER YEARS IN WASHINGTON. INDIRECT APPROACH MAY IN
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TIME MAKE HEADWAY.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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